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SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE NEWS

REGION 4

JUN

COMPRISING STATES OF LOUISIANA, ARKANSAS,
OKLAHOMA AND TEXAS, EXCEPT HIGH PLAINS AREA

REGIONAL OFFICE--FORT WORTH, TEXAS

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NO. 5

DISTRICTS BILL BECOMES TEXAS LAW

Texas last month became the thirty-fifth state to pass a soil conservation districts law to enable her farmers to attack the problem of erosion cooperatively. All states in Region 4 now have conservation laws similar to the standard act recommended by the Department of Agriculture.

Broad rights in conserving their soil and water resources in adopting good land use practices are given in the law to Texas landowners, who immediately began the process of organizing the State Soil Conservation Board which shall administer this enabling act.

The State Board is composed of five members, each representing one of the five sections into which Texas is divided by the law. It is authorized to offer such assistance as may be appropriate to supervisors of soil conservation districts which may be formed under the law; to coordinate the programs of the several soil conservation districts by advice and consultation; to secure cooperation and assistance of Federal and State agencies in the work of the districts, and to disseminate information on activity and programs of soil conservation districts and to encourage their formation where desirable.

The Texas law generally follows the outline of the standard act. Districts, however, are limited in size to 3,000 square miles, or 1,920,000 acres.

Fifty, or a majority, of the landowners residing within a proposed district may file a petition with the State Board asking that a district be formed.

Voting on the question of organization of a district is limited to resident landowners who also are qualified voters by reason of having paid their poll tax. A two-thirds majority of the votes

actually cast is required for the creation of a district.

District supervisors shall be resident landowners in the district from which they are elected and be actively engaged in the business of farming or animal husbandry. They will receive no salary. However, they may receive compensation for services not to exceed \$4.00, for each day in actual attendance upon the duties of the office within the district. The number of days for which they may receive this remuneration is limited to twenty in any one calendar year.

Under the Texas law, land uses are not mandatory in a district until nine-tenths of the landowners vote for them in elections.

-SCS-

DR. BENNETT WILL ATTEND TEMPLE FIELD DAY

Dr. H. H. Bennett, Chief of the Soil Conservation Service, will be in Texas this month to attend a soil conservation field day and tour of the Elm Creek project to be held at Temple on May 29.

The field day is being conducted so that proponents of soil conservation assembled in Temple for the organization of the State Soil and Water Conservation Board may see soil and water conservation practices in operation on a field scale basis. The local soil conservation association is sponsoring the event.

A rally of those interested in the promotion of erosion control and the wide-spread adoption of soil and water conservation practices is being sponsored by the East, South and West Texas Chambers of Commerce in cooperation with the Temple Chamber of Commerce and Board of Development.

Dr. Bennett will speak to the assembled visitors at a meeting to be held in the Temple Football Stadium the afternoon of May 29. He will be introduced by Governor W. Lee O'Daniel.

Farmers and agricultural leaders from all sections of the state will be in Temple on May 29 when newly elected members of the state soil conservation board meet to organize and elect a chairman.

-SCS-

SOIL CONSERVATION WEEK TO BE OBSERVED IN TEXAS

Governor W. Lee O'Daniel has proclaimed the week beginning May 28, "Texas Soil Conservation Week".

The governor in his proclamation called attention to the soil conservation law and said:

"For many years the rich top soil of Texas farms and ranches has been washing away, depleting the fertility and making agriculture less profitable. This enormous loss of wealth can now be stopped by all interested Texans taking full advantage of this soil conservation bill and cooperating in putting it into operation."

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ASSISTANCE GRANTED OKLAHOMA DISTRICTS

Memoranda of understanding between the supervisors of thirteen Oklahoma soil conservation districts and the U. S. Department of Agriculture now have been signed, according to a report of the Oklahoma Soil Conservation Committee as of May 1.

These districts are McIntosh, Arkansas-Verdigris, Garvin-Murray, East Central Oklahoma, Konawa, Kiamaichi, Upper Washita, North Fork Red River, Cottonwood Creek and Stephens County Soil Conservation Districts, all of which were in operation when the report was made, and Farm Security, Jackson County, and Canadian Walnut Soil Conservation Districts, which recently have received memoranda of understanding.

The committee reported that twenty-seven districts covering 15,089,149 acres had received the committee's approval.

The ten districts which first began operations reported that a total of 303 agreements had been signed covering 45,184 acres. There were 1,216 additional applications on file covering 194,564 acres. The committee reported that 405 agreements contemplating the adoption of conservation and good land-use practices on 73,697 acres were in process of preparation.

Progress and accomplishments listed by the state committee concerning the first 303 farms taken under district agreements include plans for terracing 11,173 acres, contour cultivation of 12,266 acres, and the conversion of 6,159 acres of land from its former use to permanent pasture.

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THREE NEW DISTRICTS VOTED IN LOUISIANA

Louisiana landowners last month voted overwhelmingly to organize three additional soil conservation districts, bringing the total number of districts in the state to eleven.

Calcasieu district was authorized by a vote of 1,269 "for" and 26 "against". The vote in the Lower East Red River District was 626 "for" and 4 "against", and in Grand Coteau Ridge District, 513 landowners voted "for" and 7 "against" the formation of a district.

Approximately 1,500,000 acres in Vernon, Allan, and Beaugard Parishes are in Calcasieu Soil Conservation District. Lower East Red River District comprises about 1,300,000 acres in Winn, Grant, Rapides, LaSalle, and Catahoula Parishes. Grand Coteau-Ridge District covers 267,082 acres in Evangeline, St. Landry, Lafayette, and St. Martin Parishes.

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ARKANSAS DISTRICT PROGRESS LISTED

Supervisors of South Crowley Ridge and Terre-Rouge Bodcaw Soil Conservation Districts in Arkansas entered into memoranda of understanding with the Department of Agriculture in May.

Approximately 397,180 acres in parts of Lee, St. Francis and Cross Counties are in South Crowley Ridge District. Terre-Rouge Bodcaw District covers about 875,000 acres in parts of Hempstead, Nevada, and Lafayette Counties.

Conservation surveys had been completed May 1 on 1,641,904 acres in the ten Arkansas districts which were in operation at that time, according to reports made to Glenn Riddell, state coordinator of the Soil Conservation Service in Arkansas. These surveys have been completed on 422,620 acres since January 15.

Supervisors of these districts had received applications for assistance from 3,623 farmers. On the first of the month, 1,418 agreements had been signed covering 187,594 acres.

In addition, 110 farm plans, covering 14,913 acres, had been completed and presented to farmers for their signature. A total of 146 farm plans were being prepared for 18,277 acres.

Twenty-seven educational meetings, attended by 1,389 persons, were conducted in April. Six meetings were held with a total of 94 farmers in planning and program execution.

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REGION 4 CONSERVATION PROGRESS LISTED

More than 15,605 farmers owning or operating 2,487,303 acres in the work areas of Soil Conservation Service projects and camps of Region 4 in Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas on March 31, had installed or were establishing complete and coordinated soil and water conservation systems on their farms.

The increase in the number of agreements and in the number of acres since January 31, largely results from the inclusion of Oklahoma, except the Panhandle, in Region 4.

Conservation systems have been completely established on 7,203 of the 15,605 farms. Completed farms cover a land area of 1,053,725 acres.

The following tabulation shows the division of progress by states and by camps and projects:

<u>Location</u>	<u>No. of Agreements</u>	<u>Acres in Agreements</u>	<u>No. of Farms Completed</u>	<u>Acres in Completed Farms</u>
Projects:				
Arkansas	1,086	131,233	413	70,181
Louisiana	836	122,010	587	86,863
Texas	1,389	194,952	1,084	135,090
Oklahoma	1,745	237,936	862	80,842
TOTAL	5,056	686,131	2,946	372,976
Camps:				
Arkansas	2,211	357,041	752	101,896
Louisiana	1,516	307,867	562	94,878
Texas	3,497	639,450	1,920	332,606
Oklahoma	3,325	496,814	1,023	151,369
TOTAL	10,549	1,801,872	4,257	680,749
REGIONAL				
TOTAL	15,605	2,487,303	7,203	1,053,725

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RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AVAILABLE AT LAND USE PROJECTS

Recreational facilities developed as a by-product of the application of good land-use measures on land utilization projects in the Region 4 sections of Texas and Oklahoma and in Louisiana and Arkansas will be available to the public in at least four project areas this summer. These areas are at Bonham, Texas; Fayetteville, Arkansas, Minden, Louisiana, and Muskogee, Oklahoma.

The amount of land devoted to recreation in each project is relatively small in comparison to the size of areas set aside for development for grazing, for new and old forests, and for wildlife.

The objective of the land utilization program is to correct social and economic maladjustments in rural areas by changing the pattern of occupancy and consequent use of the land. Submarginal land or land not primarily suited to cultivation has been purchased and is being developed and improved for sustained use. Pastures have been developed, improved, and protected from erosion. New forests have been planted and old forests have been protected from fire, grazing, and improper cutting. Thousands of acres have been planted to furnish food and cover for wildlife. The development of recreational facilities is a logical utilization of lakes which have been constructed for the conservation of water.

Fishing will be opened in Lakes Fannin and Davy Crockett at the Northeast Texas Land Utilization project near Bonham, June 1. Facilities available at Lake Fannin to the public are sixteen overnight cabins, boats, a bath house, a diving tower, picnic areas and a community hall.

Approximately 600,000 trees have been planted on 700 acres in the 5,000-acre area set aside for forest development. On the 8,000 acres in the grazing area on this project, three stock ponds have been constructed and twelve others are planned. Pastures have been improved by sodding 4,784 acres and overseeding 6,000 acres to legumes.

Fourteen cabins, a bath house, and a sand beach and the community lodge are available at the Cookson Hills project near Muskogee. Boats are rented by concessionaires. There are more than fifty picnic units. Fishing, however, will not be permitted at present.

More than 1,000,000 seedling trees have been planted on 1,200 acres in the 15,000-acre area allocated for development as forest. The 10,500 acres set aside for the grazing area have been improved by the construction of 2,500 check dams, 500 miles of terraces and contour ridges. Ten ponds have been constructed to store water for livestock.

A bath house, a beach and a diving tower have been provided at Lake Wedington in the Northwest Arkansas project near Fayetteville. State regulations prohibit fishing there before 1940 but other water sports are now available to the public. Boats may be rented. Thirteen cabins have been completed, and the community hall probably will be in use in June. There are also a number of picnic areas.

A total of 3,500 of the 4,000 acres allocated for the grazing area in the project have been sodded and overseeded to lespedeza and grasses. Four hundred acres have been contour ridged or furrowed. The new forest plantings include 350,000 seedlings on 260 acres. There are 14,000 acres in forest development, including 12,000 acres in new forest. Four thousand acres are protected from fire losses by fire lanes, truck trails, lookout tower, and by other work done to reduce fire hazards.

Swimming and boating probably will be available at Minden, Louisiana, later this summer as a beach, a diving tower and swimming pool are provided for water sports. A bath house is nearing completion. There is a recreation or assembly hall on the project.

Conservation measures applied on the 1,000-acre grazing area include the construction of 67 miles of terraces and of 400 check dams. Fourteen acres have been sodded. Eight thousand acres have been allocated for forest development. Trees have been planted on 1,150 acres. Fifty thousand plants have been put out for wildlife cover and food.

Land utilization projects at Stillwater, Oklahoma, and at Paris, Arkansas, are being operated by Oklahoma A. & M. College and by the U. S. Forest Service, respectively.

Other land utilization projects of the Soil Conservation Service in Region 4 are at Homer, Louisiana, Decatur and Ladonia, Texas; Cheyenne and Idabel, Oklahoma, and Forrest City, DeValls Bluff, Camden, and Van Buren, Arkansas.

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146 Districts Cover More than 78,000,000 Acres.

As of April 15, a total of 146 state soil conservation districts embracing 78,089,824 acres of land in 24 states had been formed by landowners, according to the May 1 report of J. Phil Campbell, chief of the division of cooperative relations and planning.

At that time, the report continued, 97 soil conservation districts in 22 states had entered into memoranda of understanding with the Department of Agriculture.

-SCS-

ASSISTANT SECRETARY VISITS REGION 4

Harry L. Brown, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, was principal speaker at the agricultural and conservation conference of the West Texas Chamber of Commerce in Abilene, May 16.

Before leaving Region 4, Assistant Secretary Brown visited Soil Conservation Service projects at San Angelo and Vernon. He was the guest of honor at a luncheon given by farmers and business men at Vernon on May 18. He spoke at Oklahoma City, May 19.

At Abilene, Mr. Brown expressed confidence in the agricultural future of the "so-called dust-bowl", but he added that "proper land use, proper management and treatments are necessary".

The Assistant Secretary recalled the dust storms which swept from the Midwest, over the Nation's capitol and even out into the Atlantic Ocean.

"These dust storms of a few years ago did more to arouse this Nation to a need for a conservation land use program than all of the writings of our agriculturists", he declared. "It was a dramatic manifestation, and it brought home to us the need of controlling water erosion as well as wind erosion.

"We heard then, during the height of the drouth, dire predictions", he said. "We were told agriculture would never again flourish in the Panhandle of Texas. We heard ominous reports of a great American desert that was forming in the Southwest, and we were scared".

Today, he declared, the picture is quite different.

"We no longer are afraid", he explained. "We know now that wind erosion can be controlled. We have developed the techniques and we understand some of the things that must be done to control erosion, both by wind and water, and we have set ourselves to the task of getting them done."

The stories of "catastrophe" naturally angered many persons in the "dust-bowl" area, because, Mr. Brown said, "they knew the land, the climate, and the resourcefulness of its people."

The anger and the drama of the dust storms, however, aroused the Nation to such an extent that "conservation of the soil came out of textbooks and scientific papers and became a part of the everyday life of the people who live on the land".

The Assistant Secretary said that soil conservation programs "must be co-operative enterprises, with Government--Federal, State, and local--and the users of the land each doing a share of the job".

"Government should not, and cannot, do it all", he declared. "Single-handed combat with erosion is costly. Moreover, it can never be anything but piecemeal. A soil and water conservation program must, if it is to live up to its fullest possibilities, bring into use all of the known good, practical means of saving soil and water. And it must bring them to bear on all of the land, not just parts of it."

He explained that Federal and State aids to the agriculture of West Texas "are carried on with the fact in mind that saving water and making maximum use of it is the key to better land use".

"The great need is to hold the water where it falls in order to grow vegetation to hold the soil", he declared.

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NEW OKLAHOMA WATER FACILITIES PROJECT APPROVED

The Department of Agriculture this month informed Louis P. Merrill, regional conservator of the Soil Conservation Service, of the establishment of the Lebos Creek and Gypsum Creek Watersheds water facilities project lying in Harmon and Jackson Counties, Oklahoma, and Childress County, Texas.

Farmers operating lands in the 275,000-acre watershed of the two creeks will receive Federal assistance in installing facilities needed to build up supplies of water for range and cropland improvement and for livestock use.

The new project increases the number of water facilities projects in Oklahoma to three.

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MUTUAL CHAIN CARRIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM

The dramatized radio program, "Fortunes Washed Away", produced cooperatively by the Soil Conservation Service and the agricultural department of the Nation's Station, WLW, Cincinnati, is now being broadcast by the Mutual Broadcasting System. It is expected that the program will be made available to Mutual stations in Texas and Oklahoma in the near future.

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SECRETARY WALLACE STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

"Farmers are potentially the most important group of wildlife conservers and restorers in the United States", Secretary Wallace said in a radio address over the National Farm and Home program in March during observance of Wildlife Week.

"In a very real sense the further improvement of wildlife conditions depends on agriculture--on what we do with our lands", he continued. "And I feel that this improvement is being planned better than ever before through our coordinated land-use programs, as well as by farmers who are actually doing something for wildlife throughout the country".

Secretary Wallace also said in part:

"In many instances, wildlife serves man's sense of beauty and his business activities at the same time. Sportsmen, camera fans, hikers, and others who find their best recreation among the wild creatures know this full well whenever they realize the extent to which their recreation leads them to spend money--money for gasoline, for accommodations, for cameras, for fishing tackle, for all kinds of outdoor equipment. There would indeed be many losses and many kinds of losses if our wildlife should disappear. But I am confident that our national interest in wildlife is so great now that we shall never have to contend with any deliberate destruction of this resource--nor with any willingness to permit its destruction.

"Of course, we shall have to continue our careful restraints against depleting our wildlife. But our needs today are much broader than this. Wild creatures, like ourselves, are dependent on the land, and if we are to continue to have them with us we must see to it that enough land is theirs, too.

"The Federal Government's concern with wildlife problems began as a service to agriculture, in a small research unit of the Department of Agriculture studying the food habits of birds in relation to farm crops and insects that destroy crops. Historical developments have led to general conservation work by this Department that is fundamentally concerned with wildlife problems as they pertain to agriculture. Yet we see now that there is such a real interdependence of wildlife conservation and agriculture that these developments seem logical and practical also.

"Today we are solving many problems at once, demonstrating the principle that any sound conservation program has general as well as specific benefits. Soil conservation includes measures that make conditions much better for wildlife as well. Preventing floods by upstream engineering has definite benefits for wildlife and wise forest management means wildlife management also. Submarginal lands

are often found to be better for wildlife purposes than for any other, and when such areas are devoted to wildlife we again solve two problems. Yet in all these programs we shall realize the maximum wildlife benefits only as we make a deliberate effort to do so, only as we keep the needs of wildlife in mind.

"It is my conviction that we shall restore our wildlife to something approaching its former abundance only by devoting more attention to wildlife in connection with all our activities-- continuing, of course, our restrictions in hunting and our provision of sanctuaries, but at the same time making wildlife at home almost everywhere. The main objective is the restoration of wildlife as an enrichment of experience for an increasing number of citizens who can find in the out-of-doors a renewed strength for doing their part in our increasingly complex civilization."

-SCS-

DR. BENNETT TO SPEAK IN LOUISIANA

Dr. H. H. Bennett, Chief of the Soil Conservation Service, will be one of the featured speakers to appear during the special summer course dealing with conservation of natural resources being offered by the Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, Ruston, Louisiana, next summer.

Although a definite date for Dr. Bennett's lecture has not yet been set it is expected that he will talk some time in July.

Louis P. Merrill, regional conservator for the Service, will be the first special speaker for the soil and water conservation series of the course. He will speak on June 16, discussing the subject, "An Introduction to the Study of Soil and Water Conservation". The course will begin June 16 and last six weeks.

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